

Best Management Practice



Responsible for BMP: Laura Ward

Date of Latest Revision: 6/1/2014

Species Grown: Crassostrea Virginica (Eastern Oyster), Mercenaria mercenaria (Hard Clam)

Location of Farm: Little Bay in the city of Newington, NH

Description of Basic Farm Process: Fox Point Oysters, LLC. Operates a 1/5 acre oyster/clam farm using bottom culture.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

Fox Point Oysters, LLC., endorses the ECSGA Code of Conduct for Molluscan Shellfish

Shellfish farmers shall:

- Conduct aquaculture operations in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and acquire and maintain all pertinent permits.
- Make the best effort to produce and handle products of the highest quality and ensure product safety.
- Make a best effort to communicate early and openly with water based and land based neighbors about all facets of their operation.
- Work to benefit the local economy by patronizing local businesses and through employment and contributions to the tax base and infrastructure.
- Site, plan, develop and manage aquaculture operations in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts.
- Site, plan, develop and manage aquaculture operations in a manner that ensures the economic and social sustainability of the operation.
- Take all appropriate measures to avoid and contain disease outbreaks and report them quickly to the proper authorities if suspected.
- Dispose of culturing waste and chemicals in a manner that does not constitute a hazard to human health or to the environment.
- Consult and collaborate with government authorities, researchers, other producers and stakeholders for the development and implementation of regulations, technologies and standards to achieve environmentally, economically and socially sustainable shellfish culture when feasible.
- Encourage other growers to adopt the shellfish code of conduct and better management practices.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ELEMENTS

Permits and Titles

Fox Point Oysters, LLC. has all of the permits required by the state to operate a shellfish farm and to sell our product in-state and out-of-state.

The Farm Site

It is important to have a farm site that will support good shellfish survival and growth, and at the same time avoid unnecessary conflicts with navigation, traditional fishing and protected habitats and species. It is a state requirement to mark the farm site, and these markers also serve to keep recreational and commercial boat traffic away from the site to avoid damage to the boats and to the growing shellfish. Site marking also serve to minimize inadvertent or intentional poaching. A good farm site also need to be protected from future changes that could make the farm site unusable or less valuable, especially upland or upstream development that could negatively impact water quality or reduce access to the sites.

Farm Sitting

** Protecting vulnerable species and sensitive habitats is important to us and to the community.

The farm site and plan was reviewed in a public hearing held in 2011.

- Our farm site was chosen for characteristics necessary for good shellfish growth.
- Our farm site is in a state-approved aquaculture zone.
- Our farm site was chosen to avoid sensitive habitats.
- Our farm site chosen to avoid submerged aquatic vegetation and to avoid interactions with protected species.
- Our farm site was chosen to stay clear of navigation channels and areas traditionally used for fishing or recreational boating.

Site Marking

- Farm boundaries are marked according to state regulations.

- GPS is used to ensure that farm operations occur in the permitted location.
- Damaged or missing boundary markers are replaced as soon as possible.

Good Neighbor Policy

We recognize that even though we took care to properly site our farm that there are still some cases where we need to take extra care to be good neighbors. The following are some of the things we do to be good neighbors.

- We operate boats and machinery to minimize noise.
- We take the time to talk to the owners of homes adjacent to the farm site in order to keep relations friendly.
- We look for opportunities, and when possible make presentations at public events in order to educate stakeholders about shellfish farming and its benefits.

Seed Sourcing

One of the most important aspects of good management on the farm is the selection of seed and its source. Good seed will grow faster and stay healthier. Fox Point Oysters chooses seed from reputable hatcheries which lessens the possibility of introducing diseases and unwanted organisms into our environment. For these reasons our seed is certified disease free and seed from out-of-state hatcheries are approved by state officials.

OPERATIONAL/MAINTENANCE ISSUES:

Fouling Control

One of the most difficult tasks on our farm is keeping the gear and the shellfish free of fouling organisms. The task is similar to that land farmers face with weed control. And as with land farming, if we allow the fouling organisms to get out of control they will choke our crop and reduce yields.

- Fouling organisms are scrubbed by hand; no heavy machinery is used for fouling control.
- We never use chemicals that could harm the environment at our farm site.

Predator Control - There are a number of predators that prey on shellfish and in some cases can occur in significant numbers and cause a lot of damage to the crop. It is important for us to recognize predators that can cause harm, and either keep them away from our crop through exclusion or remove them from gear and release them.

Gear Maintenance, Disposal and Recycling - The gear used to grow our shellfish represents a significant investment, and we do everything we can to make sure it stays in place and doesn't become a hazard or nuisance to others. The farm and gear is regularly inspected for damage. We are also committed to recycling as much material as possible when it is no longer usable.

Handling and Reporting Disease

The shellfish we grow are susceptible to a couple of diseases caused by microscopic organisms. These diseases do not affect the quality of our product nor do they pose any problems for people who consume them. Keeping disease to a minimum on our farm is important and it is important for us to communicate farm diseases to other growers and to state authorities so that disease outbreaks can be contained as well as possible. In order to control diseases on the farm:

- We monitor our crops and if disease is suspected we will take samples and send them to a competent laboratory for analysis.
- We will communicate confirmed disease events to appropriate authorities and neighboring growers.

Protecting Human health - Producing and selling a product that is safe to eat is critical to our business. The National Shellfish Sanitation Program, working through our state authorities, sets the food safety standards by which we operate. All NH farms are licensed and/or monitored through:

NH Fish and Game

NH Department of Environmental Services

NH Department of Health and Human Services

- We get our shellfish under refrigeration immediately after harvest.

RECORD KEEPING - MONITORING THE CROP AND THE ENVIRONMENT

As in any business, maintaining good records is a key part of good management. Having good records of the environment and good data for our crops allows us to become more efficient.

*In addition, Please note that \$0.015 per oyster sold is paid by each farmer to NH Fish and Game and goes into their general fund. NH is the only state in which this occurs.